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SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR H/SENATE AFFAIRS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Ontario's Deadline to Eliminate Trash Shipments to Michigan  
In Question

REF: TORONTO 33

Sensitive But Unclassified -- Please protect accordingly.

11. (SBU) Summary: It is unclear whether Ontario will meet its 2006 commitment to phase out shipments of municipal trash to Michigan by the end of 2010 (reftel). The Province has yet to release up-to-date figures for the last two years, despite assurances that the effort is on track. As part of its waste diversion strategy, Ontario's Ministry of Environment has proposed an extended producer responsibility (EPR) framework. End Summary.

12. (SBU) An Ontario official told Post on February 8 that the Province is still on target to meet its commitment to eliminate shipments of municipal solid waste to Michigan by the end of 2010. However, when Post asked for data reflecting the Province's assertions that they would meet the 2010 deadline on February 2, and again on February 8, Provincial officials declined to provide updated data on waste shipments to Michigan. Provincial environmental officials admitted in a February 1 meeting that it had been "a while" since they briefed Michigan Congressional staff on the status of Ontario's efforts to phase-out garbage shipments.

13. (SBU) Roughly half of Ontario's trash comes from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Shipments of waste from the City of Toronto (at the center of the GTA) to Michigan began in 1998, and increased when Toronto's only active landfill closed in 2002. In late 2009, Toronto announced that it would not reach a 70% waste diversion target it set for 2010, partly due to a protracted civic strike in the summer of 2009.

14. (SBU) In order to facilitate waste diversion, Ontario is moving towards an extended producer responsibility (EPR) framework, where those who manufacture products and their packaging are responsible for managing the associated waste. The comment period for the Province's EPR proposal closed on February 1, 2010.  
JOHNSON